

## Terror and Terrorists

DESPITE RELENTLESS CAMPAIGN against terror, terroristic acts are on the rise, both here and abroad. The recent attacks in places of worship have raised a number of questions that the authorities look too eager to bypass. There are multiple types of terror acts which have shaken peace and killed so many of innocent people. And official response to combat terrorism follows the usual pattern of talking more in terms of counter-terrorism which in turn perpetuates the cycle of violence. So far, the government measures have been to tighten the security, to pursue the investigations in a particular direction and to postulate the involvement of the terrorist groups from Bangladesh and Pakistan, which may have more than a grain of truth in that. But how come the matters stand where they were and the control of these acts is nowhere in sight. One of the theories doing rounds is that, since the laws like POTA or TADA have been abolished these acts are taking place, so they should be brought in again. But these black laws were in existence during the NDA regime and one has seen enough of acts of terror during that time also, including the attack on Parliament. The terrorists are willing to get killed in the act, so can such laws deter them?

The answer is 'no' if 'terrorists' or militants as they are variously described, get politically and ideologically motivated.

So far what are the examples where either some reduction or partial success has been achieved in controlling this insanity? Two of these stand out. One, the political understanding between central Govt and Nagaland, did result in the control of the situation there to a great extent. The role of political process in this case deserves serious attention. Same way one is seeing the reduction in the acts of terror in Kashmir during last three years, of the current ruling coalition. This Govt. has been the outcome of a reasonably fair election process. The democratic representation of people coupled with the political process of dialogue with different groups has been a major factor. As large acts of terrorism are due to the underlying political discontent, one has to begin with the political process to tackle the terror attacks.

It is the political alienation, which is the root cause of the formation of the psyche of the terrorists. The mere rhetoric of 'War against Terror', which only operates by the biases against particular communities, the biases which by now have assumed institutional characters, can in no way weed out the problem. United States claimed to have launched a war on terror after 9/11. Can there be such a thing as 'war on terror'? Terror is an abstract concept coming into being because of innumerable reasons.

The foremost reason is the politics for control of oil resources, which gave rise to outfits like Al Qaeda, which are not spreading far and wide. There is the ethnicity related issues, like Kashmir, North East and nearer home in Srilanka. Ethnicity-related violence has national appeal, may be it is sub-nationalism. But it has deeper penetration in society. Also the rising communalization and consequent polarization of communities is always nursing fertile ground to give birth to terrorism. Terrorists are not coming from the hell. The increasing sense of despair in the minority community cannot be tackled simply by doling out sweet words. Mere superficial approach cannot make any headway in preventing terror attacks. □□□